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782 123 Flannery: "I tried to be well prepared by a long period of study as to what to tell him [Cooper] so that I could do something big for his health, that his health might be restored. I sort of prepared for this all winter long and then decided I would write this letter to him in the Spring of the year when everyone seems to feel good and [to be] glad that they are still living and that they survived the hardships of the winter and that it is time for rejoicing and that even the animals are glad that spring had come around again. They then woke up from their long sleep of hibernation when they bored underground or under a pile of rocks or whichever way they could get away from . . . winter. I tried to get him [Cooper] the full benefit of it. I am glad to hear he liked it. I tried hard to put into words what I wanted for my friend [Cooper], and so that he would get more I chose that time of the year [spring]. That is when all the animals wake up and talk and sing and move around and let the whole world know: 'I am still around too.' . . . They have made a real effort to live that long. . . . They try to keep themselves in existence as long as they can by growing and singing and running and so forth. . . . If I made my friend feel better and was able to master the great distance between us [Montana to Washington, D. C.] with those few words, I am exceedingly glad and will always feel good when I recall that letter and those words because they made him feel good. Besides my words written down, everything that I had went with them."

191 213 The Boy's message in the letter, as translated very carefully from his dictation in Gros Ventre and written down by his nephew, Thomas Main, was in part as follows:

123 539 782 "Dear friend—As winter is over and spring is on in its place, it makes one feel good. And as I listen to the talking song of the meadow larks they bring back pleasant memories of my association with you. So I am writing this letter to bring my thoughts into expression.

"I hope I can infuse and saturate into this paper my feelings for you and my concern for your welfare and doctor you with the tidings and blessings which the season of spring always brings, when all nature arises from a long sleep, so that you too may enjoy the healing winds and sunshine which abound at this time.

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a young man's skin back of Thomas Main's house." (The cut off pieces of skin were, as at the Sacrifice Lodge, placed on the buffalo skull, "as an offering of the [person's] very body.")

Singer. "For cutting offerings of flesh from the arms they usually tried to get the same doctor who cut off my finger joint (see infra). He would take the flesh, put a needle through it and cut the flesh off. . . . He would then put the cut-off flesh in one of the bags from around the buffalo or cow heart which were used to carry water, and would hang it up or bury it. Women could not do the flesh cutting for themselves; they had to have a man doctor to do it. You promise so to torture yourself for some reason such as the wish to save the life ot your sister or brother or other relative. For instance, if some young fellows were going off on a war party, the sisters would get out and make some such promise as: 'I will give part of my flesh or my finger if my brother comes back a great warrior.' It was great to have somebody [some relative] come back a hero, a brave man, or, as they called it, a big chief. . . . A wife could do this for her husband but usually it w[as] a sister who thought that much of her brother. . . .

"I have a scar on my left upper arm [which she showed]. [I] made this promise for the recovery of one of my daughters [who] was ill. A sick person is doctored, but such a promise is mad[e] a last resort. Lame Bull told me they were going to make a big [one] like the ones they made on men. The cutting was done in a sweat-lodge where they all sat and prayed. They blackened the spot on my arm with charcoal,[10] then clipped the flesh off and held it up to the sun and said: 'This is what we offered you.' He cut me in four places on each arm. My husband was mad because it was too much. The one place on my left arm where the scar is was cut deeper than the others. After I made that promise I had the cutting done right away. [Mary Ereaux, our interpreter, here interrupted: "Goodness, you might just as well have done like the Sacrifice Dancers. You tortured yourself just as badly."] I held myself in but they certainly hurt me. They did not put anything on the wounds, only the charcoal beforehand. People try to

[10] Blackening sacrifices was a common (perhaps *the* regular) Gros Ventre procedure.